

27. *Winge's Report on the Birds of the Danish Lighthouses, 1909* \*.

[Fuglene ved de danske Fyr i 1909. 27de Aarsberetning om danske Fugle. Ved Herluf Winge. Vid. Meddel. f. d. nat. For. i Kbhvn., 1910.]

This is the twenty-seventh annual report on the birds killed at the Danish Lighthouses and sent to the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen for examination. In 1909, 1287 such specimens were received from 37 Lighthouses, but the duplicates were not sent in all cases, and the total number of birds that perished in this way must have been at least 3000.

The specimens received in Copenhagen are referred to 85 species, among which *Alauda arvensis*, *Sturnus vulgaris*, *Sylvia hortensis*, *Phylloscopus trochilus*, and *Ruticilla phœnicurus* were numerous. Of the Thrushes, *Turdus iliacus* contributed 148 victims, *T. musicus* 133, *T. pilaris* 31, *T. torquatus* 21, and *T. merula* 22, but of *T. viscivorus* only a single specimen was received. Single specimens of *Muscicapa parva* and *Phylloscopus superciliosus* were taken. Of the Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) 62 examples occurred. A large number of field-notes follow the systematic list, and a chart is added shewing the exact position of all the Lighthouses.

VI.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to the Editors:—

SIRS,—It may interest your readers to know that I have just received from the Vladivostok Museum for identification a small collection of 87 salted bird-skins, made this summer by Mr. I. E. Efresnov in the Khabarovsk district on the Lower Amur, near Lake Bolen-Adjäl, and that the collection contained a male specimen of the *Mergus squamatus* of Gould procured by Mr. G. I. Kornilaev on the river Kur

\* For a notice of the Report for 1908, see 'Ibis,' 1909, p. 712.

near the new village Garmakhta, about  $49\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N. and  $134\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$  E. of Greenur, on the 13th of August, 1910 (new style).

The colours of soft parts and the dimensions in the flesh are recorded thus by Mr. Kornilaev;—"Bill dark grey along the culmen, sides of bill and mandible red. Iris grey. Feet cinnabar-red, with dark yellowish webs. Length 570 mm., expanse of wings 750; the wings fall short of the tail by 93 mm."

Other dimensions, taken by me from the skin, are: wing 230 mm., tail (very much worn) 110; tarsus 44.5; middle toe with claw 61; bill along the exposed culmen 57 and from the fore end of the nostrils 36, height at base 15.3 mm.

From the fore end of the nostrils to the tip, each side, of the maxilla, there are 19 teeth-like lamellæ, as in *M. serrator*.

The specimen seems to be quite mature and to be assuming its fresh winter-garb. The mantle is glossy black, but there are numerous old feathers of a dark leaden grey with a somewhat brownish tinge. The lower back and rump are ashy grey and shew two broad dark concentric bars with white interspaces on each feather, giving this part a coarse scaly appearance. Most of the feathers have a dark shaft-stripe on the basal half. Wings coloured just as in the male *M. serrator*, the broad white mirror being divided into three by two broad black transverse bands. There are dark bases to the secondaries and their larger coverts.

The upper parts of the neck and head are olive-brown, with an occipital crest about 50 mm. long. This colour becomes rufous brown on the under surface of the head and on the two adjoining thirds of the neck. The lower throat, chest and breast, flanks and under tail-coverts are white, with two (three on the flanks) coarse dark concentric bars (each about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 mm. broad) on each feather. The remaining parts of the under side, including the breast, wing-linings, and axillaries, are white. All the white parts in this skin, which is still quite soft, have a beautiful intense pinkish tinge.

It seems quite probable that this bird may breed in the Khabarovsk district, going in the winter to Inner China.

Anyhow this skin adds a new and interesting species to the Palæartic Fauna, and it is, so far as I know, the first summer specimen of *Mergus squamatus* on record. I will do my best to obtain fuller information about this little-known bird next season.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

S. A. BUTURLIN.

Wesenberg, Esthonia,  
Russia.

[This is a rare bird of great interest, first discovered by Gould in 1861. In the collection made by Capt. Wingate in South China in 1898 (which was described by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant in this Journal for 1900) there was a fine pair of this Merganser (see 'Ibis,' 1900, p. 602, pl. xii.). These specimens are now in the British Museum, as is also Gould's original type.—EDD.]

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SIRS,—I see that on page 730 of vol. iv. 9th series, 1910, of 'The Ibis,' in a notice of the 'Annals of Scottish Natural History,' you refer to a paper by me in the latter.

I wish to point out to you that Loch Martnaham is in *Ayrshire*, not Dumfriesshire, and that the American Bittern is alleged to have been shot there in 1848, not 1898.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

HUGH S. GLADSTONE.

Capenoch, Thornhill,  
Dumfriesshire.  
Nov. 5th, 1910.

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SIRS,—About twenty years ago, the late Mr. Howard Saunders told me that he had found an unrecorded egg of the Great Auk (*Alca impennis*) in a small museum in France. When, in 1894, the Earl of Gainsborough was residing at Dinard, Mr. Saunders informed him of this egg being at Dinan and at the same time gave me the information as to its locality. Lord Gainsborough tells me that when he saw

the egg it was slightly broken, and my brother, who was at Dinan in 1895, described the egg to me as being cracked, poorly marked, and dirty.

Early in September last Mr. Henry Stevens, who was staying in St. Malo, kindly went with me to Dinan to photograph the egg. Upon our arrival we found that the Castle (until lately used as a prison) had been restored and made into a museum, but not finding many Natural History specimens exhibited, we called on the Curator, who told us that he knew nothing of any Great Auk's egg being in the collection. The birds and other animals were so old and badly stuffed that they were not worth moving and on the previous afternoon had all been stored in an attic at the Hotel de Ville. We then called upon the Maire, M. J. Jouanin, who very kindly accompanied us to the Hotel de Ville and had the room unlocked, and on the floor, amidst a jumble of stuffed birds, I found the remains of the Great Auk's egg.

Mr. Stevens kindly photographed the two largest fragments,  $3'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$  and  $1\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ , and these shew that the egg was marked with faint blotches at the larger end. As few of the other fragments were so large as a shilling, it was impossible to form any idea as to the size or shape of the whole egg.

Yours &c.,

EDWARD BIDWELL.

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*Report of the South African Museum for 1909.*—The report of this important Institution for the year ended 31st December, 1909, is rather a sad document. The severe measures of economy occasioned by the state of the Colonial finances have not spared the Museum. The Trustees complain of lack of space, insufficiency of staff, and want of funds, and shew most plainly that their remarks can be fully justified. Nevertheless, some progress has been made under nearly every head, especially as regards Vertebrate Palæontology. A good addition to the Bird-collection has resulted from the visit of Mr. P. C. Keytel, of Cape Town, to the Tristan

da Cunha group of islands. In the series of eggs collected by him and presented to the Museum are examples of those of *Phæbetria fuliginosa*, *Thalassogeron culminatus*, *Catarrhactes chrysocome*, *Puffinus gravis*, *Prion vittatus*, *Stercorarius antarcticus*, *Sterna vittata*, and *Micranous leucocapillus*. The eggs of the Great Shearwater are of special interest, as, although it is "a fairly regular visitor to British waters," Saunders tells us that "nothing is known of its nidification," but that it is supposed to resort to some of the islands in the Southern Ocean for the purpose of reproduction. If the eggs in question have been correctly identified, Saunders's surmise will be proved to be correct.

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*New Ornithological Periodical.*—We have received three numbers of a new ornithological periodical. Unfortunately it is in Russian, so we cannot make out much of it, but the Russian title is translated as "Messenger Ornithologique" in French and as "Ornithologische Mittheilungen" in German, and the Editor is M. G. T. Poliakoff, Leontiewsky Perelok, Moscow. Amongst the contributors we find the names of Buturlin, Alphéraky, and Sarudny, all well known to us. There is a long article by Alphéraky upon the birds of the Sea of Azov and by Sarudny on the ornithology of Turkestan. Mr. Buturlin makes a new genus of Campophagidæ, *Motacilloides* (type *M. cinereus* = *Pericrocotus cinereus* Lafr.), and many new subspecies. He also reviews the Nightingales (*Philomela*) and makes a new species, *P. transcaucasica*. No worker on Palæartic Birds should fail to consult this new Journal.

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*The Expedition of the B.O.U. into Central New Guinea* \*.—We much regret to state that, in consequence of renewed attacks of fever, Mr. Walter Goodfellow, the Leader of the Central New Guinea Expedition, has been compelled to resign his post and is on his way home. Under these

\* See 'Ibis,' 1910, p. 762.

circumstances Capt. Cecil Godfrey Rawling, C.I.E., F.R.G.S., who went out as Surveyor to the party, has been instructed by the Committee to take the command, the duties of which, we are sure, he will execute with his well-known energy and ability. It appears that shortly after Mr. Goodfellow's return to Wakatimi in June last there were heavy floods on the River Mimeka, and the whole camp and surrounding country became covered with water. He and his companions were constantly obliged to walk about in water up to their knees, and much damage was done to the stores. When the flood subsided the whole camp became a bog, and it is no wonder that there were many cases of sickness. The headquarters have now been removed to a new camp on the Waitakwa River where it leaves the mountains, three days further up. But in order to get at the snowy peak of Carstenz it will probably be necessary to cross the Waitakwa, and to try another river further east, probably the Letakwa, where the waters are said to come down straight from the snow.

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*Boyd Alexander's Collection of Birds.*—From 'The Times' of December the 23rd we learn that the extensive collection of bird-skins formed by the late Mr. Boyd Alexander is to be presented to the Trustees of the British Museum, and will form part of the great National Collection at South Kensington. Of course no other more appropriate destination could be found for it. The specimens, which are from various parts of Africa, are about 4,000 in number. Alexander made his first African Collection in the Cape Verd Islands, which he visited in 1897. After a second visit to the Cape Verd Islands in the same year, he joined in an expedition up the Zambesi and its tributary the Kafué, and formed a series of nearly 1,000 skins.

In 1900 Alexander, who then held a commission in a West India Regiment, took part in the expedition for the relief of Kumassi, in which he was accompanied by José Lopez, his Collector. As the relief column advanced José followed slowly behind and formed an excellent collection.

On leaving Kumassi Mr. Alexander was sent with a column of Hausas to Gambaga, the head-quarters of the northern territories, where he met with many interesting forms of bird-life. From Gambaga he trekked in May, 1901, to Salaga, and thence on to the river Volta, finally reaching the coast at Accra. His collection of birds formed during this expedition numbers nearly 1,100 specimens.

In 1902, when he had completed the description of his Gold Coast collections, Alexander visited the island of Fernando Po, and discovered a large number of new species, including the remarkable long-tailed tree-warbler (*Urolais mariaë*), representing a new genus and species. From 1904 to 1907 he was engaged in the Alexander-Gosling Expedition, which crossed Africa from the Niger to the Nile and explored the countries bordering Lake Chad. The new species of birds obtained by him on this journey were some 29 in number.

On his last journey Alexander first visited the islands of San Thomé, Principe, and Annabon, in the Gulf of Guinea, on each of which he made a complete collection of birds. After touching at Fernando Po he crossed to Cameroon, ascending the peak and making extensive collections. Thence he proceeded to Lake Chad, and met with his death on the confines of Wadai on the 22nd of April last.

Descriptions of all the Collections except those of the last journey, which have been only lately received, were written by Alexander himself and published in this Journal. It is hoped that a general catalogue of his Bird-collection may be prepared and published with the dates and exact localities of every specimen.

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*Death of Captain Shelley.*—With much regret we announce the death of Captain George Ernest Shelley, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., of 30 Egerton Gardens, South Kensington, which took place at Bournemouth on the 29th of November last. We hope to be able to give some account of the life and work of this distinguished Ornithologist in our next number.